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TUESDAY 17 MAY

Delight O Meter an Innovation in Measuring Customer Delight



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We often forget the powerful role sales and marketing play in establishing expectations with customers. With a tendency to over promise and do what is necessary to attract customers, this approach may consummate a sale, but will often disappoint customers going forward. Setting lofty expectations is a win/win only if those delivering the products and services can live up to the expectations. Newly formed relationships can quickly become tarnished when the experience is less than promised.

Meeting expectations doesn't build loyalty

Imagine you had a Delight O Meter at each touchpoint of a customer journey to rate both the expectation and experience customers are having.

One look at the meter and you could quickly tell which of the three situations customers are in

1. Experience is not measuring up to expectation - Dissatisfaction

2. Customer is in the zone of indifference where experience matches their expectation - Satisfaction

3. Experience exceeds expectation - Delighted

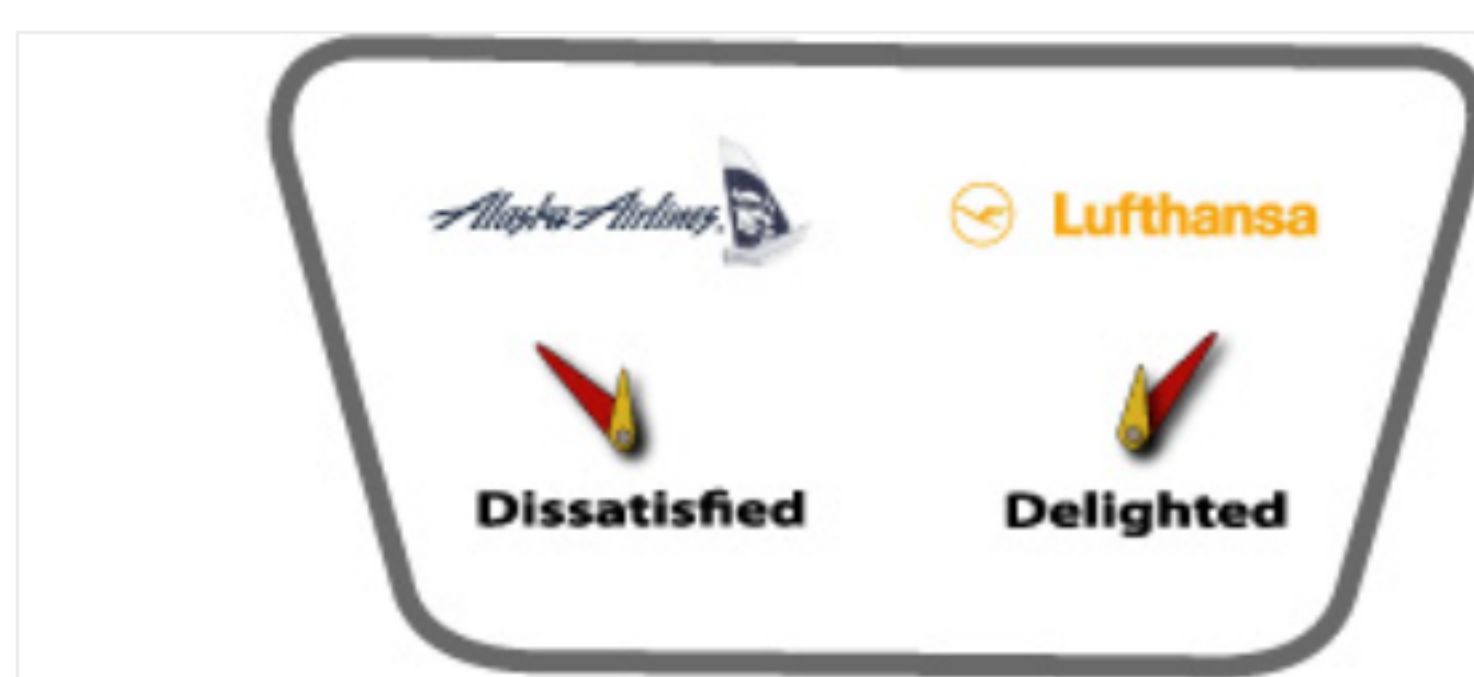
A reading in the zone of indifference is where many get confused. Thinking that a satisfied customer is also a loyal customer. Dissatisfaction and delight are not opposite ends of the same scale. A Customer who is satisfied simply means the absence of dissatisfaction, not the motivation to become a repeat customer. Remember, expectations build over time and may shift in the customer's mind.

The challenge is to get beyond satisfaction to motivate a customer. Only when the experience delivered exceeds the expectation is a customer delighted and you get the benefits of a loyal customer.



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Compassionate Fares Alaska Airlines v. Lufthansa



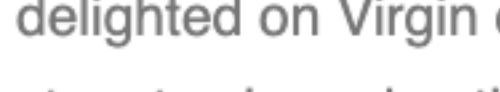
Sometimes very bad things happen to very good people. I have a close friend who recently lost her mother to a sudden and rapid battle with Pancreatic Cancer. On the morning that she lost her mother I helped my friend book some travel.

Turns out she needed to fly to San Francisco, meet with the German Consulate, then fly to Germany. The two airline booking experiences were distinctly dissimilar. One experience left a very poor brand aftertaste in the mind of this MVP as well as my friend, whereas the other experience intrigued me enough to want to fly them.

Compassionate fares should be easy to book, represent best pricing and provide additional comfort and care at various touchpoints along the customer journey. Why not make sure the traveler receives a warm blanket on the flight, comforting beverage, baggage assistance, etc. It turns out that Lufthansa did all of that and more. They provided a discount off of the lowest fare, provided food and drink aboard the flight, no baggage fees, and didn't bother with the cumbersome burden of proof that somebody died.

Alaska Airlines, on the other hand, begin immediately asking for the name of the funeral home associated with the deceased and within a sentence was citing policy. How utterly ridiculous I thought - I expected more from them. Of course there isn't any of that information available. Her mother had died hours before. After a short course in policy the powerless agent mentioned that the bereavement fair might not even be the best fair. It turns out it wasn't. The bereavement fair was \$80 dollars higher than what I could book last minute on AlaskaAirlines.com.

Lufthansa's didn't cite policy once in my interaction with them. This and their continued sensitivity all the way through messaging on the itinerary and on flight behavior has earned them future business from me and those I influence. As for Alaska, well I've gone from previously loyal to currently indifferent and will likely look to be delighted on Virgin or Southwest Airlines as other friends I've told this story to champion the airlines that have previously delighted them.



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Netflix Saves a Near Defected Customer



So there I was, having seen all of the James Bond movies before, I was mid way through Quantum of Solace and then blammo. I received the annoying on screen message saying that the disc may be scratched or dirty. Argh! This was reminiscent of the last several Netflix rentals I had rented and grounds for me to cancel my membership. I never left my couch - I accessed the website on my phone, called the number splattered on the home screen and well, I never canceled.

It turns out that my major annoyance and frustration was welcomed by a customer service rep that was friendly, spoke my native language, and validated and respected what I was saying. She moved me up the relationship ladder very quickly and I responded with a yeah thanks for helping me - I'll stick around. Smart training translated into smart actions - taking a really angry and disappointed customer and turning them around to be an advocate. Kudos Netflix, well played. You moved the Delight-O-Meter from Dissatisfied to Delighted by handling one phone call with empathy. Your Rock Star employee was obviously empowered by her organization to do the right thing for me by release several movies in my queue, seeing if there was a problem at the distribution facility, and refunding the subscription for that month.

It really isn't that hard but first you have to trust your employees, abolish the word "policy" and keep the customer situation in your sights at all times.



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